

**CITY OF REDMOND
LANDMARK COMMISSION**

August 7, 2014

NOTE: These minutes are not a full transcription of the meeting. Tapes are available for public review in the Redmond Planning Department.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Thomas Hitzroth (Chairperson—LC), David Scott Meade (Chairperson—DRB), Joe Palmquist (Vice Chairperson—DRB), Craig Krueger, Kevin Sutton

EXCUSED ABSENCE: Miguel Llanos (Vice Chairperson—LC), Michael Nichols, Scott Waggoner

STAFF PRESENT: Kim Dietz, Senior Planner, Redmond Planning Department

RECORDING SECRETARY: Susan Trapp *with* Lady of Letters, Inc.

The Landmark Commission is appointed by City Council to designate, provide additional incentives to, provide review of changes to, and provide expertise on archaeological and historic matters pertaining to properties qualifying for either a national, state or local register status.

LANDMARK COMMISSION

The meeting of the Landmark Commission was called to order by the Chairperson of the Commission, Thomas K. Hitzroth, at 7:02 p.m.

MEETING MINUTES

IT WAS MOVED BY MR. PALMQUIST AND SECONDED BY MR. MEADE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 17, 2014 MEETING. MOTION APPROVED (5-0).

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Topic: Old Schoolhouse Bell repair, maintenance, and preservation

Description: Discuss next steps for addressing the bell including confirming direction from the City Council/Landmark Commission's Joint October 8, 2013 Meeting

Staff Contact: Kim Dietz, 425-556-2415, kdietz@redmond.gov

Mr. Hitzroth reminded the Commission that the bell in question is an artifact. He said the bell that is up at Redmond High School is not a precedent for this case, in that the high school bell is made of different materials and is under different preservation standards. The Old Schoolhouse Bell is in such a condition that it should not be accessible, in Mr. Hitzroth's opinion. Mr. Hitzroth said the bell should be available to the public, but should not be touched. He noted that earlier in the evening, he saw a child playing on the bell. He told the child and his mother that the bell was in very fragile condition. Mr. Hitzroth was on the Commission when the bell was placed where it is now. There were several options available at that time, but the hope was that the niche the bell was in, in the Public Safety Building, would protect it from the elements and still make the bell available to the public. He did not think the Commission estimated the fragility of the bell over time very well.

Ms. Dietz showed the Commission a picture of the bell from its most recent restoration in 2000. The bell was made between 1885 and 1889 by the Cincinnati Bell Company. The material is cast iron and is going to rust. The restoration included replacing a bracket on the left side of the bell, which is now starting to rust again. Major cleaning was done as well. In order to preserve the bell, a surface treatment is applied to keep out the elements. Beyond that, the bell is exposed on a ledge and water does eventually seep in. When water gets into cast iron, the freezing and thawing process will eventually result in a crack. The bell has a crack in the bracket on the right hand side. The clapper underneath is a major attraction and people love to play with it. The oil from people's hands also reacts with the metal and requires frequent cleaning and maintenance. The clapper has been secured to avoid future damage, but people try to get it free from the bracket that is in place to make it function. Sometimes, there is chalk art covering the bell. Ms. Dietz

said the situation today involves some big damage to the bell and more rust. Repair and significant cleaning and restoration will need to be undertaken.

Ms. Dietz noted that the Commission has spoken in the past about moving the bell into a place that could better protect it. The long-range plan would be to move the bell to the planned light rail station downtown. She said the City Council's joint meeting with the Commission last year had a variety of perspectives, but the group landed on a few different options in terms of placement of the bell. Those locations include City Hall, the old Redmond Schoolhouse, the light rail station, and O'Leary Plaza. The conversation seemed to end when someone suggested that if the long-range plan is to move the bell to the light rail station, it could be left in its current location at the Public Safety Building. Ms. Dietz asked the Commission for its thoughts on the option of creating an enclosure for the bell that could be opened up seasonally and potentially rung by the mayor ceremonially, for example. Another option would be to have a fully sealed enclosure to keep the bell intact.

Mr. Hitzroth said this bell is the only bell in the local area that is as intact as it is. The supports that it rests on are not found in bells from other cities. Personally, he would like those supports to remain attached to the bell instead of being put in storage. The bell is also beginning to sag, in that the old supports are having trouble holding up the main part of the bell. To leave the bell intact, something would need to be put underneath it. Mr. Meade said some support from below could be created, but it should be a non-metallic material so it does not react with the cast iron. If there was an enclosure, the bell could be supported from above, as well. He said a tempered glass enclosure could be created that could be opened at certain times, potentially, but could offer a good level of weather protection. Mr. Hitzroth said Tukwila has done that with a historic bell. Mr. Meade said he would like to keep the bell in the Public Safety Building or City Hall. He said putting the bell at the light rail station in the future would be a good idea as well.

Mr. Krueger said he would like to have the bell at the entry to City Hall. He was surprised to learn that an enclosure was not put around the bell earlier. He supported the idea of creating an enclosure for the bell. He said the bell did not need to be exposed for people to touch. Mr. Hitzroth said the Commission put out the bell in 2005 for public enjoyment. At that time, the Commission did not understand the fallout, which is the deterioration and exposure of the bell. The hope was that the mayor, for example, could use a rubber mallet and hit the bell and keep it preserved. The Commission did not plan for all of the eventualities, and now, Mr. Hitzroth said creating an enclosure could help make up for lost time. This bell is older than the one at the Redmond School and one of the older bells left in King County. He said Redmond could set an example to other communities as to how this preservation could be done.

Ms. Dietz summarized that the Commission would like her to explore having the bell at City Hall and to look at an enclosure with the option of allowing the bell to be exposed seasonally. She is talking to two contractors right now to look at the bell for the full suite of repair and enclosure work, including securing the bell. One contractor has proposed securing it from the bottom with some gaskets that would protect the bell. She will have information from the other contractor for the next Commission meeting in September. She confirmed that the Commission was ready for her to go through the procurement process at the City Level for this project. She would like to do this work before the weather changes. Cleaning the bell is most easily done on a warm day. Mr. Hitzroth said Redmond has some unique artifacts, like this bell, and he commended the Commission for its work to keep those items preserved.

ADJOURNMENT

IT WAS MOVED BY MR. KRUEGER AND SECONDED BY MR. MEADE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. MOTION APPROVED (5-0). MR. HITZROTH ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 7:23 P.M.

September 18, 2014
MINUTES APPROVED ON


RECORDING SECRETARY